

International

space city

Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 3

March 2007



Mayor's Office, City of Houston

Office of International Affairs & Development

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Message from the Mayor

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with the chairs and chairs-elect of all seven regions of the Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council (MIADC). I am very proud of the many accomplishments made by this group during its first year, and the wealth of great ideas it has generated, which promise more exciting developments in years to come.



Bill White

The MIADC capitalizes on the strengths of Houston's various international communities, and has taken a leading role in defining and strengthening Houston's international culture. Our city's culture can take the form of art exhibits or musical performances, but it is a reflection of the outward-looking and welcoming spirit of Houston — two qualities, which I believe make our city great.

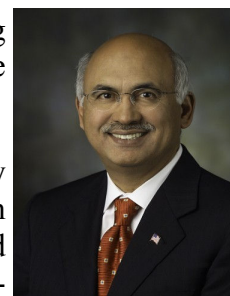
With this spirit in mind, I encourage you all to attend this year's Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, a great example of Houston's cowboy past, celebrated in our increasingly international community.

Bill White, Mayor

Message from the Chairman, International Liaison and Protocol Committee (ILPC), City Council

One of the most rewarding aspects of working with Houston's international communities is the opportunity to meet youth from around the world.

Recently, I met with some extraordinary students visiting as part of an exchange program Houston has with the cities of Shenzhen and Dalian in China. While in Houston, these students stayed with local host families, attended classes at both Lamar High School and the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, and visited many of Houston's landmarks and organizations. They even attended a public session in City Hall to learn more about how local government runs.



M.J. Khan

Houston is a truly welcoming host-city for international students of all backgrounds due to the strength and variety of our many international communities.

M. J. Khan, Council Member

Highlights of Upcoming Events

Understanding U.S.— China relations

March 1—The World Affairs Council of Houston hosts Mr. Bates Gill of the Center for Strategic and International Studies at the Junior League at 6:00 PM. Mr. Gates will discuss the intricate relationship between the U.S. and China. For more information, please visit www.wachouston.org.

Une soirée avec Jacques Brel

March 6—The Belgian Trade Commission and the L'Alliance Française will present “Jacques Brel,” an evening of culture and excitement. The event, which will feature music and French gastronomy will be held at L'Alliance's building at 7:00 PM. For more information, please visit <http://www.francophonie-texas.org>.

Oil and Gas Export Seminar

March 8—The Greater Houston Partnership and Houston USEAC will present a seminar focusing on export and re-export controls, and the economic sanctions that are relevant to the oil and gas industry. The seminar will be held at the Wyndham Hotel at 7:30 AM. For more information, please call (713) 844-3636.

Bahrain Investment Conference

March 8—Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce will host a conference featuring the delegation from Bahrain headed by Sheikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa and led by U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce, David Samson, at the Four Seasons Downtown at 9:30 AM. For more information, please visit www.bilateralchamber.org.

Night of Networking

March 15—Greater Houston Partnership hosts a night of networking for members and non-members alike. At 6:00 PM, climb aboard the luxurious clipper ship, Stad Amsterdam, to eat, drink and network with some of the region's hottest businesses. For more information, please contact pthomas@houston.org

French Foreign Trade Minister

March 21-22—The Mission Economique de Houston will welcome the Honorable Mrs. Christine Lagarde, Foreign Trade Minister of France who will be here as part of a 1 1/2 day program. For more information, please contact the French Consulate at (713) 985-3281.

American Institute of Architects

March 22—Join the American Institute of Architects (AIA) as they present Geotechnical, Environmental and Testing Issues for Buildings in Houston Forensic Evaluation of Distressed Buildings. The meeting will be held at the AIA Offices at 3:00 PM with Mr. David Eastwood, P.E. as guest speaker. For more information, please contact (713) 520-0155.

25 Years of Kuumba House

March 23—Kuumba House Dance Theatre will host its 25th Anniversary Gala at the Holiday Inn Southwest at 7:00 PM. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and Mr. Kenneth Yellowe will co-chair the event, and South African Ambassador, Dr. Barbara Masekela will be the keynote speaker. For more information, please call (713) 524-1079.

Houston-Calgary Partnership

March 28-30—The City of Houston and the Canadian Consulate will welcome a delegation from the city of Calgary, Canada. Resulting from the bilateral partnership signed between Houston and Calgary in June 2006, this delegation will meet with Houston counterparts over two days. For more information, please call (713) 247-3397.

Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council (MIADC)

Each month, we will bring you the latest updates on the developments of the MIADCs: Africa, Americas, Asia/Australia, Canada, Europe, Middle East/North Africa and South Asia.

Mayor's Luncheon

Mayor Bill White hosted a luncheon for the 2006 chairs and chairs-elect for all seven regions of the MIADC. The leaders of MIADC took this occasion to share with the Mayor the activities and future programs adopted by their regions.

Future Activities/ Goals

We have compiled for you a brief overview of some of the many projects the MIADC regions have in store for 2007.

Africa:

- Fundraising
- The Mayor's Cup
- Disaster Preparedness forum

Future Activities/ Goals (cont'd)

Americas:

- 2007 town hall meeting
- Miss Universe and Pan-American games
- 2008 trade mission

Asia/ Australia:

- Asian medical program
- Direct flights
- Houston Asian culture promotion

Canada:

- Canada night at the Houston International Film Festival
- Canada as host country for IFest
- Houston-Calgary partnership

Europe

- Houston business briefing
- European tourism
- Explore relationship between Houston and Milan

Middle East/North Africa:

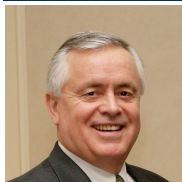
- Trade mission to foster health sector
- Direct flights
- 2007 town hall meeting

South Asia:

- South Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
- South Asian medical exchange
- 2007 town hall meeting

The Global Bridge: The Galleria Chamber of Commerce (GCC)

Each month, the International Newsletter features "the Global Bridge" section, which introduces local business organizations dedicated to promoting Houston's international image.



Don Sweat

Offering great customer service is important in every business setting, and Wilka Toppins, the Houston GCC's new Vice President for International Affairs, says a healthy dose of customer service is exactly what is needed for new business expansion in the local area.

"The good news is that there are huge opportunities," says Ms. Toppins, founder of the Toppins Law Firm, headquartered in the Galleria area. "Small to mid-sized companies need a resource that offers organized resources for 'business basics' like relocation assistance, office

equipment, legal and accountancy services, and personnel staffing."

Ms. Toppins and Don Sweat, the new President and CEO of the GCC, are collaborating on a three-pronged "coordinated approach" to international businesses desiring expansion in Houston.

"Many of the resources needed can be offered by our own Chamber members," explains Sweat, who brings more than 20 years of financial and strategic planning expertise to his position. "We can bring opportunities to the partners we've worked with for years, and to our incoming members as well."

Ms. Toppins points out that

creating alliances with existing international chambers in Houston is an important part of the plan. "We want to make sure we establish these alliances to offer the broadest reach of services and networking to our customers," she said.

The GCC is a dynamic business alliance that serves the business and cultural interests of the Galleria area, Uptown, Greenway Plaza, and West Houston, with more than 700 members in all. It hosts committees for active members that include International/21st-century Woman, Health and Wellness, Governmental Affairs and Transportation, Ambassadors, and Education.

—By Ann Cook, GCC

Honduras

This month we visit a country in Central America, known for its breathtaking sites, characterized by turquoise waters, pristine beaches, beautiful cities and ancient ruins—to speak to the Honorable Lastenia Pineda, Honduran Consul General in Houston.



Consul General
Lastenia Pineda

The Republic of Honduras is a country of many resources; its vast natural beauty lures visitors to explore capacious jungles in its mountainous regions as well as to journey into its many cities, abundant in history and tradition. However, Honduras' greatest resource is, undoubtedly, its people, says Consul General Lastenia Pineda. Having served as Consul General in Houston since 2002, she has strengthened Honduran/Houston bilateral relations by assisting Houston-based organizations and by her continuing efforts to provide Medical aid to Hondurans in need.

In recent years, direct flights have linked George Bush Intercontinental Airport with the cities of Roatan, San Pedro Sula, and the capital city of Tegucigalpa. Consul General Pineda emphasized that "Houston-Honduran relations have benefited from Houston's valued international influence, its openness to diversity and its friendliness to all visitors; with Houston opening its doors even further to continued economic progress, we hope to become the bridge of access Houston utilizes into Central America relations." Currently, the primary products imported from Honduras into Houston are shrimp, fish, bananas, coffee, melons, and products, which are assembled for U.S. companies in Honduras. However, Honduras also seeks to attract more tourists to its extensive virgin coastlines and several nature reserves.

Consul General Pineda's immediate goal is to represent Honduras in every aspect within her jurisdiction (Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Kansas). She utilizes all of her wide-ranging background in tourism, accounting, business management and theology in order to attain this goal. When speaking of business ties in her native country, Consul General Pineda said "My wish is to increase investments in Honduras so that the

country may experience an overall social benefit while also advancing the investors' interests." She elaborated on the topic, explaining that Honduran investments benefit parties reciprocally, and assure a strong future for each partner involved.

A smile came to Consul General Pineda's face when asked about her hobbies; she divulged her two favorite pastimes—spending time with her family and practicing her profession, although she also takes delight from several recreational activities, such as jogging and exercising. Consul General Pineda indicated that Houston, her first Consulate posting, will always have a special place in her heart and has become a second home for her family. Based on the past successes and her dedication to promoting Honduras in the present, Consul General Pineda believes that the future can only bring about new and stronger relations between Houston and Honduras.

—By Michelle Kneeland



Map of Honduras

Did You Know?

The State of Texas has the second largest population of Hondurans in the United States, after Florida. Of the 68,000 Hondurans in Texas, more than 27,000 live in Houston, making Houston the city with the second largest Honduran community in the U.S.

Source: www.wikipedia.org

Connections Across the Globe:

This month we track developments taking place within the Houston Airport System, the Port of Houston Authority and Sister Cities of Houston

Houston Airport System (HAS)

Another year, another list of record-breaking air traffic figures for all three airports within the HAS.

Over 51 million passengers were served by George Bush Intercontinental and William P. Hobby airports last year, marking an annual increase of 6.5% - or three-million-plus more travelers. Ellington Field also had positive figures for 2006. Total operations at the joint-use civil/military airport increased 21%.

Air cargo registered a significant increase in traffic figures. More than 367,000 metric tons of air cargo passed through Houston's airports in 2006—an increase of 5.4%. International air cargo increases made up a large part of this growth.

In the passenger arena, Air France and AeroMexico were among the carriers with the most significant increases, each registering increases of 43% and 38%, respectively.

Both China Airways and Korean Air Cargo kicked-off their all-cargo service to Houston earlier this year. Atlas Air Cargo just announced a new service from Brazil, and Emirates will begin flying here from the United Arab Emirates in December 2007. Chinese cargo carrier Jade Cargo International has also just filed with the Department of Transportation for Shenzhen-Houston freighter service.

—By Juan M. Alanis, HAS

Port of Houston Authority (PHA)

U.S. Representatives Gene Green and Al Green focused on security measures in a January 26 tour of the Port of Houston Authority's facilities. Both congressmen received briefings on PHA's port security strategies and the cooperation and integrated communications among federal, local and private partners.

"I was impressed with the technology and sophistication of the security system, and I was

just as impressed with the personnel running the systems," Congressman Al Green said.

About 800 elected officials, port commissioners, community leaders, labor leaders, and representatives of the maritime industry watched history take place on February 8. "The Berth of Bayport Container and Cruise Terminal" gave guests the chance to witness the opening phase of the most technologically advanced

container terminal on the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Conservative estimates project Bayport to generate 9,825 jobs, \$395.4 million in personal income, \$1.1 billion in business revenue and \$35.6 million in state and local taxes after five years of operation.

—By Edwin Henry, PHA

Sister Cities of Houston (SCH)

The George Bush Intercontinental Airport International Terminal will soon be graced by a mirrored map showing the locations of Houston's 16 sister cities. It is a piece of art similar to the one outside the City Council Chamber.

Continuing with its tradition of projects for youth, Sister Cities of Houston (SCH) will sponsor the Children's Day Parade for

third-graders and the Young Artists Contest for high school students. This year's theme is "An Open and Accessible World for All."

In addition, SCH will co-sponsor the eighth annual Houston's Young Moviemakers Competition, with the Museum of Fine Arts-Houston, Women in Film and Television, and Houston MediaSource. The winners of the competition will be honored at a ceremony at MFAH on April 15, and the winning films

will be screened there.

In November, the SCH will be a supporting organization at the third annual Women's Global Leadership Conference in Energy and Technology, which will be attended by hundreds of industry leaders from around the world.

—By Ellen I. Goldberg, SCH

Promoting Houston Globally:

This month we track developments taking place in the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau (GHCVB)

The Mexican traveler is rapidly changing to a more sophisticated, knowledgeable and demanding consumer. Easy access to real time information, an increase in competitive fares by airlines, low rates by hotels and more service oriented travel agencies bring more bargaining power to the individual traveler. This means that as a destination Houston needs to bring added values to attract more Mexican shoppers.

The GHCVB is working proactively and aggressively to market Houston as a leisure destination that is competitive with other cities such as Miami and Las Vegas. In order to achieve better results we have launched a new image campaign, segmenting the city into 10 main categories including: shopping, health, culture, weekend getaways and romance, and cruise adventures.

We have also designed a new Spanish tagline for the Mexican market that stresses the major changes that have occurred in Houston over the past few years and emphasize Houston as a great place to visit. Finally we have negotiated a marketing co-op with top tour operators, airlines and industry partners to create and sell Houston packages in Mexico, taking advantage of major distribution channels and economies of scale.

Last year the GHCVB participated in multiple events that gave us the opportunity to interact and conduct business with Mexican tour operators and media. We are grateful for their support in keeping Houston as a 'top of mind' destination among Mexican corporate and leisure travelers. In return we held a Houston Client Appreciation Event in Mexico City in December.

— By Daniel Palomo, GHCVB

Opportunities & Resources

Employment Opportunities

- Supernumerary, Aida Performance, Houston Grand Opera
Contact: 713-546-0237
- Executive Director, Texas Dragon Boat Association
Contact: eugenelee94@sbcglobal.net
- Fund Developments and Marketing Events, Summer Coordinator, Asian American Family Services
Contact: dionor@aafstexas.org
- Office and Accounting Manager, Masala Cruises
Contact: info@musicmasa.com

Educational Opportunity

- Business/ Civic Leadership Forum, Center for Houston's Future
Contact: (713) 844-9323

Scholarship

- Mandarin Enrichment Scholarship Program, Ministry of Education, Taiwan
Contact: (713) 871-0879
- Summer Internship Program, OCA
Contact: <http://www.ocanational.org>

**International Newsletter
is published monthly by the**

**Mayor's Office of
International Affairs
&
Development,
City of Houston**

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**Next Submission Deadline:
March 20, 2007**

March 2007

Date	Time	Event	Venue	Contact
3/1	—	Houston-Leipzig Sister City Association: Mayor Burkhardt Jung of Leipzig (through March 4)	—	(713) 227-3395
	7:30 AM	Houston Networking News: HNN Lead Exchange Breakfast	Amazon Grill	281-778-6661
	7:45 AM	Kane Russell Coleman & Logan & USE, Inc.: Doing Business with China	Houston City Club	214-777-4215
	10:00 AM	Blaffer Gallery, The Art Museum of the University of Houston (through March 31)	Blaffer Gallery	http://www.hfac.uh.edu/blaffer/index.html
	11:30 AM	Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, Indo-American Chamber of Commerce & the U.S. Commercial Service: India Space Research Organization Joint Working Group luncheon	Space Center Houston	(281) 486-5535
	6:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy	The Junior League	www.wachouston.org
	6:30 PM	Chinese Professional Club: 53 rd Annual Scholarship Ball	Westin Oaks Hotel	alicelee@att.net
3/4	11:00 AM	2007 Houston Lantern Festival	Dun-Huang Supermarket	http://www.uacahouston.org
	5:00 PM	VN TeamWork: Golden Bamboo Village Fundraising Dinner	Kim Son Restaurant	(281) 598-1777
3/5	11:30 AM	World Affairs Council of Houston: What European Union and NATO Membership have meant for Eastern Europe?	Omni Hotel	www.wachouston.net
	Noon	Scandinavian Airlines & SAS Cargo: Scandinavian Golf Tournament	Augusta Pines	http://nacchouston.org/
	6:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Ending Genocide in Darfur and Beyond	The Westin Oaks	www.wachouston.org
	7:00 PM	Medwise: Heart for Diabetes	George R. Brown Convention Ct.	http://heartfordiabetes.org/
	9:00 AM	The University of Texas School of Nursing: Surviving Stroke	United Way of The Texas Gulf Coast	http://uthcoa.org
3/6	11:00 AM	Ikebana International: The Hina Doll Party	Todai Restaurant	(281) 693-2996
	7:00 PM	Belgian Trade Commission of Houston & French Alliance: Une Soirée avec Jacques Brel	Alliance Française de Houston	http://www.francophonie-texas.org
3/7	6:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: The Jimmy Carter Book—A debate with Ussama Makdisi and Ron Dermer	The Junior League	www.wachouston.org
3/8	7:30 AM	U.S. Commercial Service, Houston District Export Council, & ABA Section of International Law: U.S. Export Controls & Economic Sanctions for the Oil & Gas Industry	Wyndham Greenspoint Hotel	(281) 449-9406
	9:30 AM	Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce: Bahrain Investment Conference and Luncheon featuring Deputy Secretary of Commerce, David Sampson	Four Seasons Hotel Downtown	www.bilateralchamber.org
3/10	4:00 PM	Houston Azerbaijanis: Azerbaijani Carpets—history and ornamentation by Ali Moganlue	Freed-Montrose Branch Library	(713) 784-2043
3/12	—	Heritage Society: Coming to Houston (through May 27)	The Heritage Society	www.heritagesociety.org

3/13	11:30 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: What the Future Holds—An Insider's look at Israeli Politics	Hyatt Regency Hotel	www.wachouston.org
3/14	11:30 AM	Asian Chamber of Commerce: Monthly Luncheon featuring Jimmy Lee, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders and the President's Advisory Commission on AAPI	Westin Galleria Hotel	(713) 782-7222
3/15	7:30AM	Greater Houston Partnership: Bag the Elephant — Win and Keep Big Customers	Hilton Americas Hotel	(713) 844-3678
	6:00 PM	Greater Houston Partnership: Night of Networking	Stad Amsterdam, Galveston	pthomas@houston.org
3/21	—	Mission Economique de Houston: the Honorable Mrs. Christine Lagarde, Foreign Trade Minister of France (through March 22)	—	(713) 985-3281
3/22	3:00 PM	American Institute of Architects Houston: Geotechnical Environmental and Testing Issues for Buildings in Houston—Forensic Evaluation of Distressed Buildings	AIA Office	(713) 520-0155
	6:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: A View of the Middle East	The Junior League	www.wachouston.org
3/23	7:30 AM	Asia Pacific Business Outlook: Conference	Univ. of Southern California	http://apbo2007.com/
	7:00 PM	Kuumba House Dance Theatre: 25th Anniversary Gala	Holiday Inn Southwest	info@kuumbahouse.org
3/27	11:30 AM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Calderon's Challenges—An Assessment of the New Government of Mexico	Hyatt Regency	www.wachouston.org
	11:30 AM	Greater Houston Partnership: Lunch & Learn—A Cold Call Workshop	Partnership Boardroom	(713) 844-3692
	6:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Beyond Terrorism—Building a Resilient Nation	The Westin Oaks	www.wachouston.org
3/28	—	City of Houston & Canadian Consulate: Delegation from Calgary, Canada (through March 30)	—	(713) 247-3595
3/29	7:30 PM	The Irish Society: Stories from a Sacred Landscape	Univ. of St. Thomas - Cullen Hall	TheIrishSociety.org
	7:30 AM	Asian Chamber of Commerce: Breakfast Mixer	Hilton Garden Inn Westbelt	(713) 498-2879

We have one simple goal: to promote Houston as a renowned international city.

The contents are intended for general information purposes only.